

Recycling and Refuse Management Committee

Minutes from 2/5/09 meeting

Present: Meg Vickery, Chair; Susan Waite, DPW Liaison; Marianne Lorenzelli; Lucy McMurrer; Sterling Bush; John Root; Greg Keochakian.

January minutes were approved without changes.

Membership

Clare Bertrand has officially resigned. John Root is interested in joining in her place. Letters thanking Harvey Allen and Pat Church were signed by members and will now be sent out.

Board of Health Regulation Update

Susan distributed copies of the regulations. Existing wording about business recycling is vague. Susan discussed potential changes and it was suggested that the Chamber of Commerce could help get word out to local businesses on regulation changes.

Styrofoam Ban

Lucy learned that the ban that Great Barrington has had in place since 1990 is short and to the point. It curtails retail businesses using Styrofoam, not schools or supermarkets. She did not have any response from the Nantucket contact. Susan will follow-up with both Great Barrington contact (to find out if there were any large hurdles they had to overcome to pass the measure) and the Nantucket contact (to learn anything she can about their initiative). Lucy will search online for the town of Nantucket's bylaws regarding a Styrofoam ban.

Select Board Liaison

Susan was told that our town manager appointed committees (like ours) typically are not assigned Select Board (SB) liaisons. If we feel it is important to have someone assigned to our group we can make a special request. The option of running our questions past the Chair or a familiar SB member is always open to us. The group decided that we just need someone to guide us on various issues occasionally. John will talk to Aaron Hayden to get his reaction/ideas about the potential Styrofoam ban.

Sharps (safe needle disposal) Program

Keith Carlson, Amherst Public Health Nurse, met with Susan. In 2010 a state-wide waste ban for hypodermic needles will go into effect which may render our Sharps program obsolete. Both Keith and Susan are doing more research on this. Susan wants to work with Diane at the Transfer Station to get a SHARPS box out there for needle disposal.

Transfer Station Update

The bookshed roof needs to be repitched if it's going to be repaired at all – this complicates the process immensely (remodeling will require adherence to codes that the existing shed is able to avoid). Can enough money be raised to completely rehaul the bookshed's roof?

New Business

- The Governor's office is now supportive of a revised bottle bill. Gov. Patrick's budget proposal for FY 2010 includes significant income from the addition of water, juice, and energy drink bottles to the bill. Greg would like to see another deposit bottle collection barrel at the Transfer Station with bottle deposit money targeted to specific projects (e.g. a new Book Shed roof). When collection goal is met, the barrel would be removed.

- On April 3rd, at 6:30 in the Town Hall, there will be a free Home Energy Savings Seminar by the Amherst Energy Task Force.
- Clare Bertrand received a letter from Allied Waste stating that local recycling facilities are charging more or no longer accepting recycling and therefore the cost to AW's customers will be increasing. Susan will invite AW to recycle at the MRF in Springfield because it's free there.
- Amherst Grows Green is coming up (on Earth Day). Arbor Day people are interested in collaborating again on this day. Susan would like to do something but the RRMC needs to be actively behind her on this. The scavenger hunt from last year is something she'd like to repeat, but time is short. Susan will meet with Chamber of Commerce director Tony Margulis, to discuss options.
- Recycling bins need to be placed downtown, now that we've identified a way to empty them. Susan asked Committee members for help identifying potential downtown locations.

Recycling Coordinator's Report

Susan announced the digital television signal transfer date has been postponed until June of this year.

All waste hauler licenses have been renewed – Guilford said that the circumstances surrounding the money owed to the Transfer Station by Duseau are murky and we should not withhold the company's waste hauler license. We do need to let haulers know we want information about recycling vs. trash collection so we can start gathering data for 2009.

Susan passed around a sheet to confirm RRMC members' contact information. A final copy will be distributed next month.

E-waste update: Best Buy and Staples will accept computer, fax, and general screen electronic waste for a small fee. There was also a reminder that Whole Foods takes batteries, CFLs, and cell phones.

Susan will bring her DEP contact's final report to the next RRMC meeting.

Composting at Crocker Farm and Ricci's program need to be supported. Lucy will draft a letter to principal Michael Morris pointing out how, through this program, money is being saved, trash removal is being minimized, Crocker Farm's carbon footprint is being lessened, and there's a decrease in custodial staff injuries from lifting lighter bags (food waste is heavy). We need to figure out how to get this program into the school culture and the school curriculum. What are viable options to sustain this program? The South Deerfield schools might be a good place to go for ideas and inspiration. Should we invite Mr. Morris to one of our meetings and reiterate our support?

Next committee meeting scheduled for *the first Thursday of March*, the 5th at 4:30.

Meeting adjourned 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy McMurrer